291 The most prominent and significant change
177 in men's dress in Cherán is not the entry of the *catrin* garments of storekeeper and professional man of the towns, but of the blue denim jeans or overalls of the mechanic and factory worker, the garments of the proletariat. As the con-
[665] trolling group in town is allied to the Partido Revolucionario Mexicano and the Confederacion de Trabajadores Mexicanas, the town officials, including mayor and secretary, often wear over-
[292] alls, reserving their *catrin* clothes for visits to Uruapan or Morelia or for important civic events.

291 The working dress of Cherán males, and the exclusive dress of many, is trousers (*calzones*), shirt or blouse of unbleached muslin (*manta*), straw hat, and sandals (*guaraches*). A blanket or poncho (*serape*) is worn or carried as protection against cold or rain (pls. 3; 4, lower right).

The *calzones* or trousers are tight-fitting in the legs but cut full at the waist with a baggy seat. There are no buttons on the fly; instead of a fastening, the two ample sides of the fly are lapped over each other, and a sash, about 6 inches in width, is wrapped about the waist to hold the trousers. The lower part of the trouser leg has a piece of cloth tape attached which is used to tie the bottom of the *calzones* tightly around the ankle. The shirt, or more properly, blouse, likewise has no buttons. It usually has no tails, or very abbreviated ones, and is usually worn outside the *calzones*. It is open part way down the front and has a roll collar, but neither opening nor collar ordinarily is fastened. Buttons are never used, except in attempts to copy city garments, but strings may be provided. Such fitting as is attempted is badly done. A coat of *manta* may also be worn on special occasions; it differs from the blouse primarily in being open down the front and in being of heavier material. It may also be stitched in bright-colored thread.

[177] Both shirt and coat may be modified by attempt to copy urban models and sometimes are purchased ready-made.

Sandals or *guaraches* have a heavy pointed double thick leather sole and leather heel. Part of the top is of leather pieces nailed to the sole, but the major portion is made of woven leather strips passing through slits in the upper sole

632 662 666 212 Persons who are shocked at the procedures at Cherán should seriously contemplate the difficulties in carrying out a formal election with written ballots with a population which is very largely illiterate. In this case economic limitations and lack of imagination prevented carrying out the system used in national elections where the candidates each select a color and separate ballots are printed in the different colors. The voter then asks for his ballot by color and drops it into the ballot box. Not secret, and lending itself to ballot box stuffing, the method is at least an attempt to deal with the problem of an illiterate electorate. In a town such as Cherán the method followed in the election described seems equally efficacious—as long as the officials are responsive to public opinion.

632 665 666 That unconventionalities are frequent in elections is further illustrated by the presidential elections earlier in the same year. Many months before the election a group of Almazán followers organized and began an active campaign in the town. The followers of Camacho (the PRM group) remained inactive. At the end of 2 or 3 months a PRM delegation waited on the Almazán followers and pointed out that there had been no interference with their campaign but that nevertheless the bulk of the town favored Camacho. The facts were apparently indisputable, and when the PRM group stressed the fact that further campaigning could only result in creating divisions and dissensions in the town, the Almazán group ceased its campaign. At the election, Cherán cast a unanimous ballot for Camacho.

185 666 Two things of interest emerge from this account. The first is the power of the argument against disunity in the community. Particularly in the Indian community, unity is prized almost above all else. Sophisticated in some ways as Cherán is, this argument is still one of the most potent that can be made. The second point of interest is the bearing this sequence of events has on interpretation of the national election returns in Mexico. What happened in Cherán probably happened in hundreds of other towns in Mexico and helps partly to explain the one-sided results usually reported in Mexican elections.

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665 In relation to external politics, most Cherán
666 inhabitants have little interest. There are many people who are willing to take a free ride to some big rally for one or another presidential candidate, eat heartily of the free meal, and cheer the candidate's speech enthusiastically. The following week they are quite as ready to accept the hospitality of the opposing candidate, and at election time be too disinterested to vote. Not only is interest lacking, but there is considerable cynicism about the external Government agencies. As one humble farmer remarked, *"Almazán o Camacho, ¿que nos importa? Aqui siempre estamos en la riata*—Almazán or Camacho, what does it matter to us? Here we are always in the noose."

484 Some interest is also awakened by the dis-
666 covery of the Indians as a colorful adjunct to ceremonials. At the inauguration of Camacho as president, some Federal agency (probably the *Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas*) took the town officials, the band, and a group of moro dancers to Mexico City. The Cherán citizens lucky enough to get such a trip are always pleased, but it is doubtful whether they are much interested in the reasons.

FISCAL SYSTEM

632 Just as the economy of Cherán in general is
651 partly a money economy, the governmental system is also based partly on money. The presence of hired officials immediately requires some form of cash income for the town. This income is derived from the following sources:

1. Taxes on each beef slaughtered.
2. Taxes of $1.15 on each bill of sale for an animal.
3. Fines.
4. Business licenses. These are collected by the State tax collector, who remits 40 percent of collections to the municipal treasury.
5. Registration of brands. Every cattle [422] brand must be registered and the registry renewed in the first 3 months of each year. This is the biggest source of income for the *municipio*. Three pesos are collected by the *municipio*, which also collects and remits 30 centavos to the State government and 15 centavos to the Federal Government for each brand.
6. Market tax (*piso de plaza*). Every vender in the plaza on Saturdays and at the

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632 652 ment, one to the State treasurer, and one to the general accounting office of the State. The first two deal with income payable to Federal or State government, while the third deals with all the municipal accounts.

UNOFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS

467 665 The functioning of government in Cherán is often affected by unofficial organizations and informal groups. At the time of the study, the most influential of such groups was one affiliated with the CTM (*Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanas*). Probably this same group also functioned as a local branch of the official government party, the PRM (*Partido Revolucionario Mexicano*).

The actual functioning and organization of these groups was quite informal. Considerable difference of opinion existed in the town as to the desirability of such organizations, many holding that they are disruptive in character. Others, the so-called progressives, felt that such organization is necessary if the town is to receive its fair share of Government aid. Between these conflicting viewpoints could arise violent disagreement. With great reasonableness, however, the "progressives" organized only informally. Those who felt the town should be organized in the fashion mentioned, named officers and got themselves recognized by the State branch of the CTM. When documents arrive which need action or signature, the members of the group talk them over informally in house-to-house visits and send the necessary replies. There are no meetings or overt evidence of the organization. From the standpoint of union and party officials in the State capital, the town is organized; from the standpoint of the majority of the inhabitants of Cherán, it is not.

661 579 The development of this informal organization grew out of another and earlier organization that had gotten the town a bad name. In 1940–41, within a short time any investigator soon heard of the *zafarrancho*, the disorder or riot. Evidently a landmark, many events were dated by reference to this affair. To learn about it, however, was not easy. Many people refused to talk about it at all; others suggested that it was unwise to talk about it. Only after many months was the story finally secured in

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661 confidential talks, and even then it is doubtful whether all the details were abstracted from
579 unwilling witnesses. The story as learned does not seem to call for all the secrecy involved, and this gives weight to the suspicion that the truth of the underlying factors was not secured and that these factors are more operative today than anyone would admit.

At the height of the agrarian movement in Michoacán, the control of the *municipio* was secured by a group of some 30 men calling themselves "agrarians (*agraristas*)." Everyone seemed agreed that there was no genuine agrarian problem in Cherán and that the members of the group had no desire for land but only for power. Perpetuating themselves in office, members of this group at first were tolerated but gradually became more and more overbearing in their attitude. When people finally began to show signs of discontent, the "agrarians" asked the State authorities for aid on the grounds that the people were rebellious. As a result, a detachment of soldiers was stationed in Cherán under the command of a lieutenant to enforce order and the authority of the municipal officials. The young lieutenant apparently soon saw that his troops were perpetuating an illegal and unpopular group in power and tried to get his superiors to make a real investigation, but with no success. The tyranny of the ruling group now became unbearable.

The climax came when a drunken member of the group began firing his revolver on the main streets and threatening people. One of the soldiers endeavored to arrest the man and was shot and killed. The lieutenant now succeeded in having the situation thoroughly investigated, and as a result the detachment of soldiers was withdrawn. The following day occurred the *zafarrancho*. Some 10 to 12 of the "agrarians" were killed and the rest fled the town. In 1940, they were still living in exile in nearby towns.

664 For a time following this, Cherán was
665 governed by a *presidente militar*, an appointed
467 army officer. Technically, this was true in 1940, but the commander rarely even visited the town and all troops had been removed some time before. The present "progressive" government has effectively been in power since the affair. This is also the group which has

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467 organized the local branch of the CTM, no
665 doubt a factor in securing the withdrawal of
664 the always unpopular military garrison.

The leader of the progressive group is a man
159 who has not held any official office in the town,
665 Moisés Valenzuela, commander of the *reserva*. An orphan as a child, Valenzuela was aided by a woman he calls his aunt. According to Valenzuela's own story, he left Cherán at 16 and tried to go to the United States. Refused admission for some reason, he fell into bad company and became involved in smuggling liquor across the border during prohibition. Eventually the activities of the group extended to narcotics, Valenzuela was caught and held about 18 months in a Texas jail, after which he was deported. He then entered an army school, learned to read and write and received some further education, eventually becoming some sort of officer. Returning to Cherán during the time of the agrarians, he organized and led the resistance to them, and quite informally arrived in the position of being, as one informant put it, "head man" of Cherán. Locally he is regarded as an influential person over an area extending as far as the State capital, Morelia.

So far as evidence could be found, Valenzuela is an honest man, well-liked in the town. He talked several times of the necessity of going away and earning some money. According to his story, he did not mind giving most of his time for the town, but the time had come when he should look after his wife and children better than he was able to do in Cherán. Certainly he did not live in a pretentious house, and his customary clothing was overalls. His dress, of course, could be assumed for political reasons, but when he made trips to Morelia or Uruapan on community or private business, he certainly dressed little better. It is, of course, quite possible that persons with a different view of Valenzuela were afraid to talk freely. He himself deprecated his position and seemed somewhat amused that the townspeople accorded him as much respect as they did. His own story of his arrest and jail sentence in the United States was told with a somewhat rueful and artless good humor. On the many occasions he was seen with others, he always seemed ready to listen to other points of view and to advance his own without any attempt at domina-

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665 tion. It was, indeed, difficult to imagine him as the leader of a bloody riot.
159 As a final footnote on the affair of the "agrarians," one of the first acts of the new government installed in January, 1941, was to send letters to all the members of the agrarian group, inviting them to return to Cherán and guaranteeing their safety if they refrained from political activities. This was done with the approval, if not at the actual instigation, of Valenzuela.

474 An entirely different type of organization is the cooperative. Essentially an economic organization, it deserves treatment here because it potentially might yet have important political repercussions. Although not openly opposed [578] by anyone in hearing of the staff of the study, comments made by several men while drunk implied great bitterness on the part of some of the people in the town. The cooperative, still 474 in process of formation in 1941, was organized under the leadership of one Valentin Velás- 159 quez. Velásquez was not dressed in typical Cherán fashion, and he had spent several years in the United States. He speaks typically [195] Cherán Spanish, however, somewhat in the manner of the famous screen comedian, Cantinflas—he never finishes a sentence and only after several sentences is it apparent what his ideas really are. He is an orphan who has bettered himself economically at the cost of terrific effort, according to his own story, and his interest in the cooperative, he claims, is merely that of a good citizen who feels it his duty to aid others to better their lot. By his own admission there is a good deal of opposition to the cooperative, and he has been threatened with death several times. He lays this opposition to ignorance.

474 The organization of the cooperative would give it a monopoly on all exploitation of forest 313 lands except for cutting of firewood for personal use. The cooperative would charge a membership fee of 10 pesos, and members would be required to market all their products through the cooperative. Only the cooperative would be licensed by the Forestry Department and all work would have to be done in areas designated by the Forestry officials, using care not to destroy young trees. Members would receive better prices for their products through